

Keeps busy with charities

Jake Velcich looks back on full

By HELLAND SMITH

A ship burning in an Argentine harbor in 1883 resulted in Pascagoula having one of the finest restaurateurs of the Gulf Coast.

Retired restaurateur James F. Velcich is not as busy these days as he was in earlier years. He now spends a great deal of his time at the quality old wooden desk with a formica top in his combination office-store room.

As Jake Velcich, 86, sat in his office he pointed with pride to the 11 baskets that hang from the ceiling. Each one

has a memory woven into it, he said, calling attention to the heavy doors and the tongue-in-grove ceiling in his store room. He said the lumber was taken from an old house that used to stand where Ingalls' No. 1 gate is now. "It's good lumber," he said, "and the floors are solid wood. You can't buy that kind of quality lumber nowadays."

Papers and pencils and ledgers are scattered over the top of the desk, yet Jake can find any document or paper that he needs, without difficulty.

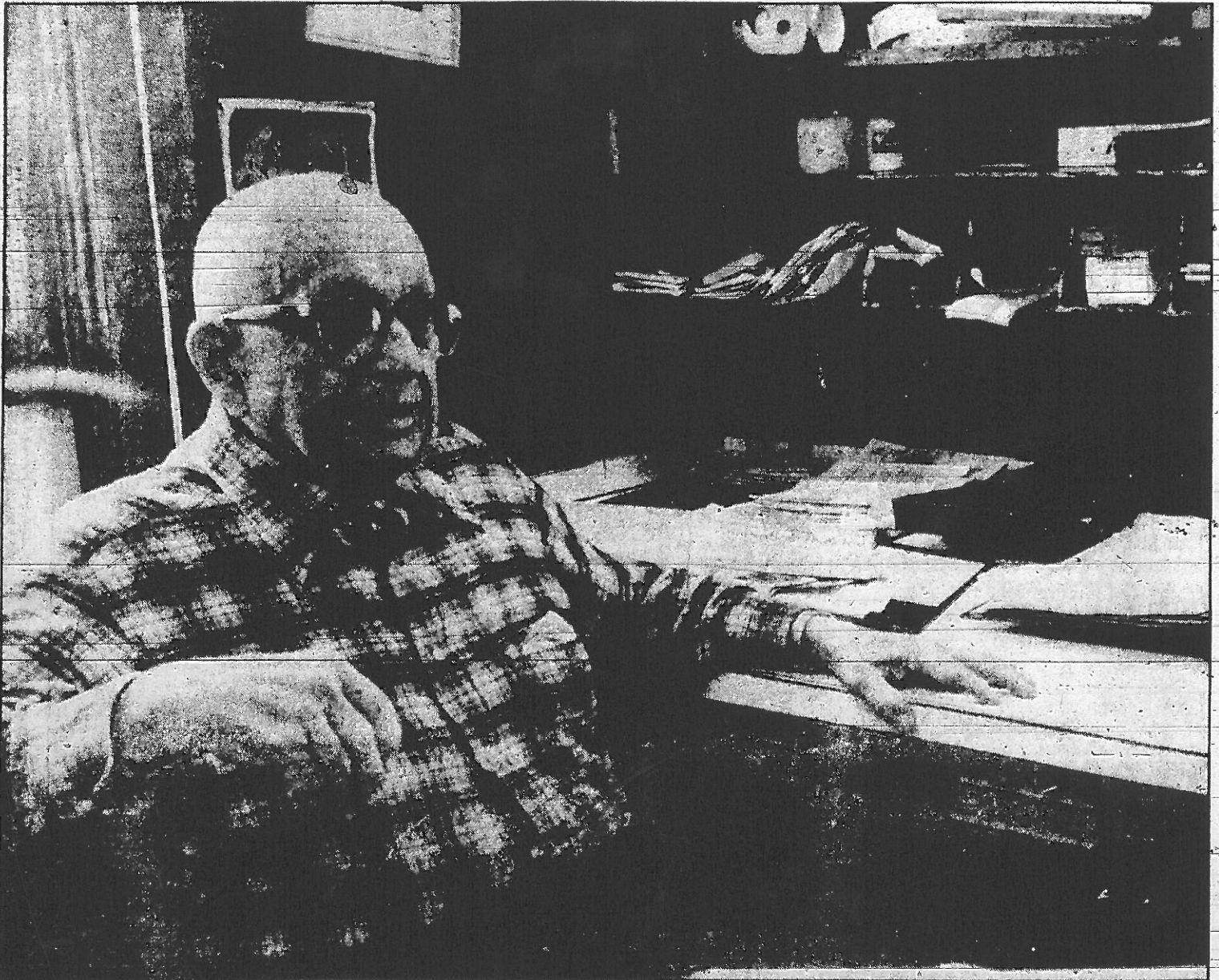
His telephone is near so he can keep in touch with old friends as well as attend to all the business matters.

Jake loves good conversation and talking about the old days. His eyes sparkle as he recalls the schooner race the summer of 1931, in front of the beach park. They were gathered and ready to go: The F.B. Walker, piloted by F.B. Walker; The Columbia piloted by Edgar Thompson; The Miss Alabama piloted by Johnny Simmons and the James F. Velcich piloted by himself.

He said it was a hard race and a fair race, and he won, and his voice was full of excitement as he reminisced.

Jake spoke about his father, James Steven Velcich, who was born in Austria and the only Velcich to come to this country. It was literally an accident that brought his father to New Orleans.

The elder Velcich loved the sea and wanted to be a ship's navigator. This love of the sea led him to a Buenos Aires harbor at 18 years of age. The ship that he sailed on burned while



A long look back

Retired restaurateur Jake Velcich keeps himself busy with various charities and civic projects, but once in a while he takes a moment out to reflect on his days as one of the coast's leading hosts. Velcich owned

and operated the Evangeline Restaurant in Pascagoula for many years before retiring from the business. But he definitely hasn't retired from life. (Photo by Helland Smith)

Books back on full life, career

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docked in the harbor there and the crew was sent to New Orleans to get passage back to the old country. The year was 1883.

The young man decided to stay in New Orleans after he met some people from his native Austria in the city. He married a young Austrian girl and fathered 10 children, five boys and five girls. Jake is the first born.

In 1900 the Velcich family moved to Bay St. Louis. There Jake went to school, and married Evangeline Gutierrez of Pearlinton on Dec. 19, 1917. They had four daughters — Evangeline Shoe, deceased; Una McGrath, Enterprise, Ala.; Trina Townsend, Pascagoula; and Joyce Tompkins, Alfreda, Ga.

Jake Velcich moved his family to Pascagoula in 1923, when C.B. Foster of Biloxi asked him to be general manager of the Pascagoula Packing Company.

Velcich stayed with the packing company until 1929 when he began to work with Colle's Mexican Gulf Packing Company. But 1939 saw this industry closed due to the aftermath of the depression years.

The four daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Velcich decided they wanted to open a concession stand at the beach park. Their parents were impressed with their daughters' ambition and helped them open the restaurant on April 30, 1938.

Mrs. Velcich's father loved Longfellow's poem of Evangeline and Gabriel so he chose the name Evangeline for his daughter. The Velcich family also chose that name for the name of their new restaurant.

Ice cream, hot dogs and soft drinks were the first dishes offered. But new items were added as the business grew. In 1959 the restaurant was moved to its present location on Telephone Road.

During the '60s the reputation of the restaurant grew. Seafood became its speciality. Crab fingers, snapper

throats, stuffed crabs and gumbo were featured, and who doesn't remember the delicious lemon ice box pie?

Velcich's voice became full of authority and his hands busy as he describes the way to handle crab meat. "Crabs are just like cattle," he said. "They're much better if they are fat. And remember, don't break it all up. You'll have your crab meat looking like threads."

"We sold as much as 300 pounds of crab meat a week in the Evangeline, and we used corn flour for our batter. It's fine ground and it doesn't make the roof of your mouth sore like corn meal does."

Ford's Treasury of Favorite Recipes for 1964-1965 gave wide-spread publicity to the Evangeline Restaurant and to Mrs. Velcich's special coconut pie. (Reprinted with permission).

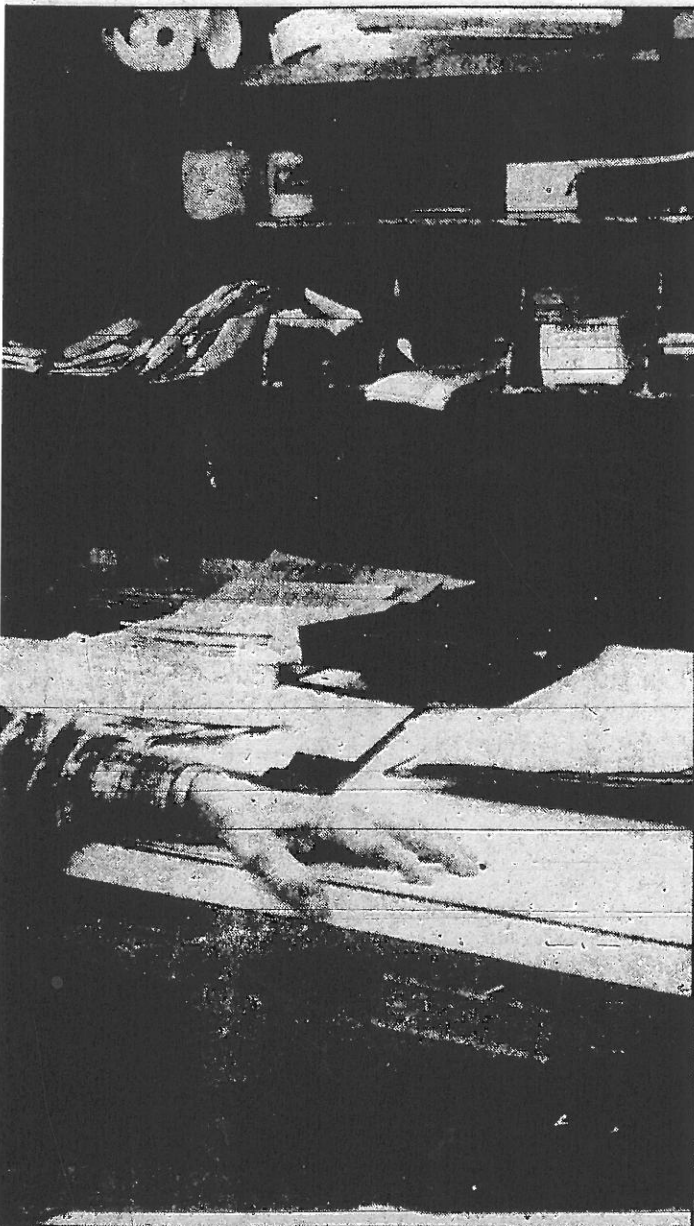
Coconut Cream Pie

- 2 cups scalded milk
- 3 egg yolks
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 3 tablespoon corn starch
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoon butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup coconut meringue or whipped cream
- 1 baked 8 inch pie shell

Scald $1\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk. Sift together sugar, flour, cornstarch and salt. Mix remaining cold milk into this dry mixture a little at a time. Add to hot milk slowly. Cook over hot water in a double boiler until mixture thickens, stirring constantly.

Beat egg yolks slightly, add a little of the hot mixture to egg yolks before adding egg yolks to hot cream mixture. Return to heat and cook again about three minutes, remove from heat and add butter, vanilla and coconut.

Cool and pour into a baked pie shell and top with meringue or whipped cream.



back

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Mississippi Press Register

**Coast
lines**

Mary L. Rodgers
Women's Editor

Sunday, June 8, 1980 — 1-D

29, at Robinson's Friendly Funeral Home from 7-9 p.m.

Funeral service will be Saturday, Sept. 30, at 1 p.m. at Emanuel Assembly of God Church, 4500 First Street, Moss Point, with the Rev. Howard Bailey officiating.

Interment will be in Providence Cemetery, Dawes, Ala.

Arrangements by Robinson's Friendly Funeral Home, Moss Point.

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VELCICH

James F. "Jake" Velcich, 96, 2911 Alpine Ave., Pascagoula, died today, Sept. 26, 1989, at Singing River Hospital. Mr. Velcich had been a resident of Pascagoula since 1923 and was a former resident of New Orleans. He was the owner and longtime operator of the original Evangeline Restaurant, a Gulf Coast landmark for many years. Mr. Velcich was a member of the Knights of Columbus, the Elks Lodge, and Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church. He

Dr. Clark McMurray, Dr. Arthur Schnieder, Judge Mary Blackwell, John Syzmonik, Mrs. Robert Gulley, Joe Leatherbury, Kay Hollister, Pol Frederic, Mrs. Dora Mae Ros, Mrs. Sallye Ferrer, and Perry Wayne Lee.

Arrangements by O'Bryant - O'Keefe Funeral Home, Pascagoula.

Area deaths

JAMES AUBREY "POP" VAUGHN, 75, 3109 Detroit Ave., Pascagoula. Arrangements incomplete. O'Bryant-O'Keefe Funeral Home, Pascagoula.

MRS. PEGGY SULLIVAN LEE, 49, 263 Eisenhower Drive, Biloxi. Memorial service 10:30 a.m., today, Riemann Memorial Funeral Home, Biloxi.

MRS. ETHEL FOUNTAIN TIBLIER, 85, North Biloxi. Services 10 a.m.; Thursday, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, North Biloxi. Bradford-O'Keefe Funeral Home, Biloxi.

JAMES LEE DEMORUELLE, 59, Biloxi. Arrangements incomplete at Bradford-O'Keefe Funeral Home, Biloxi.

MRS. ELIZABETH BEAVERS of Lucedale. Arrangements incomplete. Fails Funeral Home, Lucedale.

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manager."

He said if Smith or L said they just had to have people, "I would have armed for battle. I agree, you, we have cut some wrong people.

"If we did not have the order, bumping procedure could retain those that want to do a good job system doesn't work that

Smith explained the Service procedure and contract require regarding lay-offs and by employees with senior an example, the capital protection technician replaced with a person to learn that job and do it."

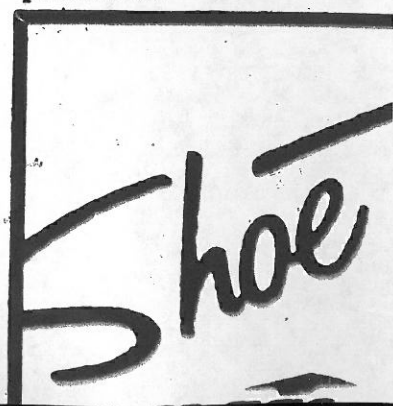
Moseley closely questioned Smith about the importance of seniority in the bumping procedure. He was assuming things being equal, the with seniority will be retained

Milstead told the council budget had to be balanced had to be approved before He said the city manager presented a balanced budget the City Council but that did not contain any expenditures.

In order to have full capital outlay, Milstead was necessary to terminate

personnel. "I agree Moseley, when you know it hurts more and if you know them, it is not easy can not overspend the budget

Milstead said if changes in anticipated revenues come, the council may be come back and reposition.



Agreement was reached that given the responsibility of the

Deaths

ROBINSON'S FRIENDLY
FUNERAL HOME
Lucedale-Moss Point
Fred Robinson Jr. Mortician



HENDERSON

Walter Ray "Face Bowl" Henderson, 37, 4024 McCall St., Moss Point, died Thursday, Sept. 21, 1989, in Plaquemines Parish, La. Mr. Henderson was born July 18, 1952, in Moss Point and had been a lifelong resident. He was employed with Plaquemines Bunker, Inc., as a fisherman. He was a member of Emanuel Assembly of God.

Survivors include two sisters, Ms. Bobbie Henderson, Milwaukee, Wis., and Ms. Mary McCant, Oakland, Calif.; uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, and other relatives; a devoted friend, Ms. Vera Nix, Moss Point.

Visitation will be Friday, Sept. 29, at Robinson's Friendly Funeral Home from 7-9 p.m.

Funeral service will be Saturday, Sept. 30, at 1 p.m. at Emanuel Assembly of God Church, 4500 First Street, Moss Point, with the Rev. Howard Bailey officiating.

Interment will be in Providence Cemetery, Dawes, Ala.

Arrangements by Robinson's Friendly Funeral Home, Moss Point.

was preceded in death by his wife, Evangeline G. Velcich, in 1961, and a daughter, Evangeline Choate, in 1976.

Survivors include three daughters, Mrs. Una McGrath, Enterprise, Ala., Mrs. Trina Townsend Weldon, Pascagoula, and Mrs. Joyce Thompkins, Alpharetta, Ga.; a sister, Mrs. Antonia Fauve, Biloxi; 14 grandchildren; ten great-grandchildren; and nieces and nephews.

Visitation was last night, Sept. 26, at O'Bryant-O'Keefe Funeral Home from 6-9 p.m. Rosary was recited at 7:30 p.m. Elks memorial service was conducted and members of the Knights of Columbus served as honor guard during visitation.

Funeral service was today, Sept. 27, at 11 a.m. at Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church with Father Patrick McDermott officiating.

Interment was in Machpelah Cemetery.

Pallbearers were John Vella, Clinton Lockard, Bill Jones, Jim Colmer, Charles Lippian, and Gary Holland.

Honorary pallbearers were Karl Wiesenburg, Dr. Francis I. Selman, Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Enger, Dr. and Mrs. C. D. Whigham, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Klecker, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Megehee, Edward Khayat, Mike Flechas Sr., Frances Larsen, Dr. Clark McMurray, Dr. Arthur Schnieder, Judge Mary Blackwell, John Syzmonik, Mrs. Robert Gulley, Joe Leatherbury, Kay Hollister, Pol Frederic, Mrs. Dora Mae Ros, Mrs. Sallye Ferrer, and Perry Wayne Lee.

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Area deaths

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10101 IS ELIMINATED HAS some of the hardest working people we have." He said good workers are being replaced by people who want to work eight hours."

Moseley said he personally knew most of the city employees and "I guess I am a little prone to put myself in people's shoes. If that is, it's just wrong."

"My feelings are deep that I can not vote for the tonight, we have cut just cutting, so to save money."

Councilman Bill White with Moseley's concern expressed his opinion that effort to balance the budget "hard working city employees well trained employees" being lost. "You're cutting your nose to spite your face," White said.

Councilman Troy Park the budget had to be balanced. "We had to do something," said.

Councilman Joe Cole Moseley and White if they alternate budget proposal as concerned about the people you are," he said.

Moseley did not have an alternate to offer and admitted he was upset with the system that was making people go who are not employees."

The mayor said the elimination of positions which resulted in laying off of good people caused him sleepless nights. He resolved it in my mind, with the original commitment to the recommendation of the manager."

He said if Smith or Le said they just had to have more people, "I would have been armed for battle. I agree with you, we have cut some of the wrong people."

"If we did not have the present order, bumping procedure could retain those that we want to do a good job. If the system doesn't work that way,"

Smith explained the Service procedure and contract requirements.

Velcich, Barbara Evangeline
Jan. 10, 1961

1-10-61
**Funeral service
for Mrs. Velcich
is held Saturday**

Mrs. Barbara Evangeline Gutterrez Velcich, 63, died at 4:20 p.m. Thursday at Singing River Hospital where she had been a patient since Saturday. She had been in ill health for six months.

Mrs. Velcich had lived in Pascagoula for 37 years and was one of the owners of Evangeline Restaurant which is starting its 24th year of operation.

A native of Pearlinton, she had lived in New Orleans and Lake Shore before moving here.

She was a member of Our Lady of Victories Church, Altar Society and OLV School League.

She is survived by her husband James F. Velcich, Pascagoula; four daughters Mesdames William F. Shoe, New Iberia, La., Joseph R. McGrath, Nuremburg, Germany, Trina Townsend and James F. Tompkins, Pascagoula; 12 grandchildren.

Three brothers, Marion McArthur, Theodore and Frank Gutterrez, Biloxi; three sisters, Mesdames W. A. Waters, New Orleans, Lee Morris, Biloxi, Fred Williams, Pascagoula.

Rosary was said at Jackson County Mortuary at 8 p.m. Friday by the Rev. Msgr. P. J. Carey with funeral services at 9:45 a.m. Saturday at the Mortuary and requiem mass at 10 a.m. at OLV.

Celebrant of the mass was her nephew the Rev. Lacy Green, St. Paul's Cathedral of Vicksburg, assisted by the Revs. Carey, James Gilbert and Patrick Quinn. Interment was in Machpelah.

Pall bearers were John Villa, Mobile, Edward Barg, Biloxi, Phillip Joullian, Biloxi, Joiner Haltom, John O. Grant, Jr., and Vincent Ros, Pascagoula.

Honorary pall bearers were James N. Lockard, Jake Ferrer, J. Guy Krebs, D. C. Joullian, Walter Gulley and Nolan Hatten.